



Well, it happened. Y2K has come and gone. A few glitches, but overall I think we all came through it pretty well. So, now we are in a new year, new decade, new century, and new millennium. For many of us (you?), we are just entering a new era of our lives: What to do after high school?

The process can start much earlier but for sake of argument, let's start in your junior year. Not much time left is there? Have you given any time to "career" thinking? You know, the classic "What do I wanna be when I grow up?" line. It's not too late, but you need to get started as soon as possible.

You may already know and have your plan already mapped out. Great, and congrats! But, if you don't, or you still need some help, here's a few things you can do to help get you started.

**SELF-ASSESSMENT**

Ask yourself:

*Just what am I good at anyway?*  
(these are your strengths)

*What do I really stink at?*  
(these are your weaknesses)

That second choice can be hard for some people. Sometimes, we tend to think of ourselves as flawless. Now it *is* good to have a good self-image, but then again, nobody's perfect. Well, maybe me, but then I digress. Back to the point. Try to be really honest with yourself here. After all, it's not like you'll be sharing this info with the world. It's just to help you get a handle on where you stand.

Give some thought about who you are, what you like, and what you don't like, such as: do you like working with your hands (carpenter, mechanic, engineer); maybe you like cooking (chef or cook); or maybe you just like to eat (food critic)!

- What are your hobbies?
- How do you pass the time? (writing, reading, sports)
- Have you worked (either for pay or as a volunteer)?
- What have you enjoyed?
- What have you not enjoyed all that much?

There are also self-assessment questionnaires available to aid you in this self-discovery. Ask your school advisor or counselor if they have any available. All right. Let's say you've

done a self-assessment. Now what do you do? I hope you don't expect ME to tell you. What do I look like, The Answer Man!? Okay, okay, I guess I could give it a shot.

Let's see, what next? Well, you have an idea now of what your strengths and weaknesses are. Now, what do you do about it?

**CHOOSE YOUR PATH**

Now start looking at what path to follow. Reading this tabloid and talking with your counselor or advisor is a great place to start. In any event, you should be talking to people--your counselor, friends, parents, coworkers. You should be looking at courses still left to take in high school. Do you need a four-year college degree for the career you've chosen? Have you already followed a college-prep type curriculum? If so, you may be all set.

Maybe the military is for you. Maybe you need to consider two-year schools, apprenticeship programs, or a specialized certification course? The path you take can depend on your likes and dislikes, your goals, and your plan.

If you have a good idea about what you want to do for work (career), but you don't know what education you need or what path to follow, here are a few places you can check for some help.

- Occupational Outlook Handbook (BLS web site or hard copy)
- People you know who have the job you want, i.e. lawyer, doctor, chef. (Maybe a parent's friend, friend of a friend, etc.)
- New Hampshire Employment Security Office or Website (They do a LOT more than just give out unemployment checks!)
- School counselor or advisor

**NOW WHAT?**

Finally, you have your degree or certificate or apprenticeship experience. Now what? Get a job of course! You knew that, right? Now you want to know how to go about finding that right job in your new-found career area. One place you could start would be with your college advisor. They will



likely have stayed in touch with you throughout your college years.

Another likely place is NH Employment Security. Remember what I said earlier, they are not just for unemployment compensation. The folks at your local Job and Information Center can help you match your skill sets with companies looking for those qualifications. Give them a call or check their Web site (<http://www.nhes.state.nh.us/default.htm>).

Try your network of friends and acquaintances. You will be amazed at how much help a good network can be. Remember that old saying "It's not what you know, it's who you know." Well, it's both really. If you don't know anything about electricity and you have a friend (or even a friend of a friend) who is a Master Electrician in a company, you're probably not going to get that journeyman electrician job they have open. On the other hand, if you've just received your degree and you have some summer experience to boot, you'll have a real good shot at that job. Obviously, this applies in all areas of interest, not just electricity.

If you have part-time jobs or internship position(s) during your schooling years, they are also a good place to check. They may have already shown interest in you working full-time for them.

You could even check with private employment agencies. Keep in mind that some will charge you for their

service while others charge only the company whose positions they are trying to fill. Ask people you know for suggestions or check the yellow pages.

This article attempts to give you a few steps to get you going in each area discussed. It has barely scratched the

surface, however, of what's available for you out there. There are reams of career development publications,

documents, hardbacks, textbooks, pamphlets, newspapers, and booklets just waiting to be picked up and read. Most of these paper documents can also be found on the Internet. In addition, there are scores (probably hundreds or even thousands) of Web sites out there, all dealing with career development issues of some form or another. There are many different agencies, companies, and associations that exist (some solely) to deal with career development, education, job hunting, and more.

Take advantage of all these resources (many are totally free) that exist for you. You can start by taking a look at different resources discussed in this publication. Your future is NOW and it's a great one. Be good to it and it'll be good to you.



**Career Myth Test**  
(Don't worry, it's easy!)

Your career decision will be an important one so it is critical that you understand career planning as you begin this journey. Can you separate myth from reality concerning the career planning process?

Test yourself on the following items by writing "T" for True or "F" for False.

1. Career testing will tell me exactly what occupation is right for me. \_\_\_\_\_
2. There is one perfect occupation waiting somewhere out there for me. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I'll only have to do career planning once in my life. \_\_\_\_\_
4. I know everything I'll need to know about my occupation of choice. \_\_\_\_\_
5. I don't have enough time to spend on career planning right now. \_\_\_\_\_
6. I should start looking for a job that is in high demand right now. \_\_\_\_\_
7. I can trust in fate to bring me to the right career. \_\_\_\_\_
8. A high salary is what most people look for in their career of choice. \_\_\_\_\_

Source: adapted from CareerNFOsource, <[web.fccj.org/~gharr/career3.htm](http://web.fccj.org/~gharr/career3.htm)> based on information from To Live Deliberately, (C) 1998 by Gary Lynn Harr

*Career Myth Test Answers:* All of the items in this exercise are false. Such myths are thought to be true by many people. This makes myths hard to distinguish from facts and often creates problems in the career planning process.